1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14



cattle have not broken into and eaten the produce, very little work is required in cultivating crops. Thus work on crop production is concentrated into less than six months leaving the rest of the year free for other activities.

Although almost all Kanuri households obtain some food and some cash from their farm plots, the amount of farming varies from person to person, from village to village, and even for the same person from season to season. In the city, many people have dropped farming and manage to earn enough cash income to furnish their needs from the market. In the villages some households, usually in areas of good soil and water supply, produce agricultural surpluses, while in other areas the farm work provides only part of the household needs. Again some farmers tend to produce fairly similar amounts of grain crops per year while others fluctuate, so that they produce practically nothing some years and large bounties a few years later. Increased prices of ground-nuts and guinea corn stimulate greater household farming activities while trade and other nonfarming activities may interfere with a man's farming. Sickness in the compound as well as blight and soil depletion tend to decrease agricultural proceeds, and finally in the rural areas increase or decrease in household size, especially in the number of wives, all tend to affect the fluctuation of crop proceeds from one household to another or within the same household over time. People who report themselves to be primarily farmers produce more than those who report themselves to be craftsmen, although for the Magumeri area the difference, when measured, does not seem to be very great. On the other hand, traders and political and religious specialists seem to produce approximately one quarter to one third as much on their farms as other people, and many in this category do not farm at all.

The importance of wives has already been noted. The number of wives available to any cultivator, as well as the number of his male subordinates in the household, is the major factor affecting crop production. The high divorce rate makes this primary source of labor somewhat unpredictable for each farmer. On the other hand it also helps to stabilize marriage. Thus the more men depend upon help from their wives the less likely they are to divorce them, although their efforts in this direction are never completely successful and the insecurity of farm help is always there. The insecurity can be alleviated by using sons or clients or laborers, all of whom require payment in some way for their help. All rural Kanuri at times help their neighbors, their relatives, or friends to farm and often a group of such men get together to help one another in a cooperative work gang and then reciprocate by helping each other in turn. Thus although many Kanuri do move around in Bornu, farming favors the most stable who can build up social relations in one place that can be utilized in the form of labor to offset the possible insecurity caused by the ever-present high divorce rate.

To make the situation more complicated many Kanuri are not rooted in the land emotionally. It is part of both the traditional and contemporary Kanuri conception of getting ahead in the world that personal advancement is not to be found in farming. Achievement in Bornu is seen as stemming out of profitable social relationships and more recently western schooling. If it is judged to be personally profitable for an individual to leave his farm work in order to become someone's client, there is little hesitation. Men asked me to take them on as clients and give them some money for trading purposes. They offered to travel anywhere in Bornu

463 467 His primary function is to adjudicate disputes between members of his craft group. Some types of craftsmen are not represented in sufficient numbers in Geidam to warrant a head man. This is true, for example, of the house builders of Geidam, who are not organized under a head man, though in Maiduguri the house builders are so organized.

463 467 621 [563] [476] About half of the draftsmen live in neighborhoods where that type of craft activity is localized. For some (butchers and sɔgdi-makers), this is because their craft is linked to an ethnic group; for others it is because the physical practice of that craft demands the use of communal pits (tanners) or vats (dyers). Still others, however, cluster together in neighborhoods because of social factors which tend to bring them together so that they form an organized segment of the society; but many craftsmen live interspersed with other sorts of people throughout the town.

463 443 Most craftsmen are involved in the activities of the market-place, where all those who deal with a product sell what they have made. Many also work in the market-place as well, and make their product to order for the waiting customer. Only the dyers, well-diggers, housebuilders, fishermen and praise-singers have no connection with the market. All of course also work outside of the market-place; in fact most of their work is done in the homes, where one can always go for any specialized aspect of their services.

463 Table IV lists a second category of craftsmen. These are

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 140]

593 father's compound to stray no more (his mother and father have never been divorced).

602 Informants always refer to matrilateral relationships as being somewhat affective and allowing of emotional expression and friendship because, they say, "These relatives are like your mother and therefore they love you very much." Such a description is rarely heard from an informant when he discusses patrilateral relationships.

604 In the parent generation there is a tendency for the drop in shame responses which accompany the shift in ego's relationships with own parents to parents' junior collaterals to be accompanied by a small rise in friendship to these relatives. There is also some friendship between ego and his parent's older siblings, but tempered with much respect by ego.

572 602 There is much friendship practised between ego and his collaterals, senior and junior, especially of the same sex as long as the age difference between them is not great. It is primarily from among kin members of the same age that ego chooses his kinship ashirmanzé (literally: his secrets-man, i.e. his most intimate [476] friend) if any of these are taken from among the kin members. They also form one of the natural sources from which ego may draw his sàrwa (informal cooperative work group) of 4-10 persons for any piece of work he might require to have done. As in any society ego not only looks to kin members of the same age but outwards to neighbouring compounds and quarters for his friendship ties, his sàrwa contributions, and his ashirmanzé.

593 There is a possibility of a strong affection and friend-

173 554 562 571 [644] guilds.(1) The Ma'aram or Shehu's sister, and the Maira, the King's mother were the head women of the state. There was also a Do'oma or head of zower (unmarried divorced women) for the entire state, as well as the Gumsu, the senior wife of the Shehu. Each town had its own local head of women and head of the unmarried divorced women under the [574] titled heads in the capital. When visitors or an army regiment arrived the total community of women could easily be organized under their leaders to prepare food and proper lodging for the strangers. The titled women in the capital were invested to their offices in male robes.

178 554 562 The title Do'oma (head of zower) is said to have fallen into disuse after the fall of the first dynasty at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but was revived in 1925 by Shehu Sanda. It exists today [644] but has no reference to zower. Informants around the palace claimed that except for the title of Maira (Queen Mother, but now held by any senior patri-female relative of the Shehu), the Gumsu (the Shehu's senior wife) chooses the women to receive the titles of Ma'aram and Do'oma. 554 562 527 Although it was not observed, informants claimed that at big celebrations of state, the titled women must wear their men's robes of office, men's hats, and walk with their special men's sticks. This ceremonial transvestism emphasizes the congruency of nobility, authority, and prestige with maleness.

554 562 [431] In contemporary Bornu, the word ma'aram has come to mean the local head of the unmarried women, who are not linked very closely into any overall state organization. It is customary for the women when they marry to give her a small payment, fataka (Kanuri for two shillings) which the men give to the Lawan (Village Area Head) before the marriage. [476] The women are organized as a semi-formal work force under the ma'aram for quite traditional purposes.

(1) See below pp. 269-270.

000 for quite traditional purposes. If visitors come to town, the head of
554 the settlement or the District Head informs the ma'aram as to how many
562 are coming and for how long. She then organizes the cooking of the food
• 476 and the water carrying for the strangers. Some informants claimed that
574 the ma'aram could commandeer cooking utensils (not food) in the market without payment while preparing for visitors.

554 The status of the ma'aram is formally expressed (as are all
576 superior-suborindate relations in Bornu) by those who say alangubero to her and those who do not. The junior must always say alangubero to the senior as a sign of respectful greeting. All women who consider themselves tala (wives of peasant-commoners) greet her with alangubero while all wives of Mai (chiefs), i.e. women of the Shehu, the District Heads of the Lawan, or the wives of the Alkalai (the Muslim judge) expect that the ma'aram will greet them by saying alangubero. In Magumeri this rule was followed, but also extended. The wife of the District Head's chief follower (the Wakil) came from a high status Maiduguri family and was personally very wealthy. She was accordingly given respect
554 by the ma'aram. It is the ma'aram in each town who always leads the
562 organization of the women during festivities, during rites de passage. or at large celebrations such as religious holidays.

Success and Stratification

55 After rational empirical causes are considered the success
828 or failure of any individual in Kanuri society can be attributed to his good fortune. This quality is an essential and variable aspect of human nature, essential for success, and variable from person to person and within the same person through time. If an individual moves up the political scale, amasses wealth, harvests a good crop, is lucky in gambling, wins judicial decisions, obtains power and authority over others, or

476 Another source of labour is the serwa (co-operative work group). This is composed of a group of relatives, friends, and neighbours, not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another to farm, fix or build houses, repair compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. These serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source.

241 464 For the upper classes and urban farm owners, labourers (usually pagan) are always available during the growing season. Many of these are local pagans living in Bornu, others are migrant labourers who have come to Bornu during the growing season to obtain their cash income for taxes.(1)

251 When the crop is harvested, food grains are taken from their stalks and stored in underground pits. Although the Kanuri utilize some aboveground storage shelters, underground storage is more widespread.

43 The cash crop (groundnuts) is sold to middlemen (sent to the bush during the harvest season to buy for traders in the city). Surplus producers of food crops store their harvest and visit markets for the rest of the year selling their produce. In Magumeri, two-thirds of the cultivators questioned in the survey were only semi-subsistence farmers. Part but not all of this is made up of income from the cash crop. Thus most people who farm have some other income-producing activity which makes up for the fact that they do not grow enough food or cash crop to maintain themselves for an entire year.

463 829 Craft production includes such occupations as butcher, blacksmith, potter, entertainer, leather worker, native doctor, hunter, dyer, lorry driver, mechanic, bricklayer. This is the Kanuri way of viewing

(1) See Kirke-Greene, A.H.M., Tax and Travel Among the Hill-Tribes of Northern Adamawa, Africa, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1956) pp. 355-369.

241 433 upon his farm production. One cultivator, a subordinate of the District Head, illustrated this point when he remarked that he had been given some good land by his superior. He told how his tax collection duties which took him away during the rainy season had severely lim- [571] ited his ability to farm. Furthermore, as a comparative newcomer to the town, and a supporter of such a politically powerful man as the DH he was not welcome in a co-operative work group, and had no subordinates or kinsmen in his own compound to care for the crops in his absence.

241 464 [586] The number of wives a cultivator has available for work is a major factor in crop production. The high divorce rate makes this primary source of labour unpredictable for each farmer from year to [571] year.(1) Numbers and nature of bərzum subordinates again help determine the labour supply. If a man has many followers, his labour source is large and secure; if he has few or none, his labour problem is a limit- • [476] ing one in crop production. Membership in a co-operative work group (serwa) may, however, help to alleviate labour problems for some, and about 60% of the farmers and craftsmen and 35% of the trader and political and religious specialists, use this source of supply.(2) Finally, for those who can afford wage labour, at a price per crop, or on daily salaries, such is generally available in all but the smallest towns of Bornu.

[434] The difficulty is that most peasant households are numerically small, and have little liquid capital. This limits the secure availability of labour to those with stable marriage relations, or to those with long and fruitful social relations in one place, i.e. kinship ties or working bərzum relationships with others in the same locality are

241 464 571

(1) See Cohen, R., Marriage Instability and its Determinants Among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria, (1958) (unpublished).
(2) See below p. 305.

000
231 of transportation besides walking. In the farm survey it was found that
511 of seventy-five household heads questioned, about one-half ( forty-five per cent) owned horses and better than half (fifty-nine per cent) owned from one to three donkeys. Horses, besides being modes of conveyance, are prestige objects of value per se, and thus are purchased for this latter purpose as well as their utilitarian value. Thus a man who already owned a horse might trade it for a bigger, a faster, or a more beautiful one, i.e. for a number of non-economic as well as economic reasons.

342 There are four house types in general use in Bornu. Each one is progressively more durable than the other and more expensive. The diagrams on the next page illustrate these types of accommodation. Type "A" is usually replaced and rebuilt every three to four years, while types "B" and "C" may last up to ten years with only minor repairs. In larger towns and among the upper classes generally type "D", a mud-walled edifice with a domed mud roof braced on wooden arches is
[178] the predominant variety. Today, burnt brick and cement with corrugated iron roofing is slowly coming in as a desirable building material at the top echelons of society.

511 With the expansion of numbers in a household, the amount of
[356] huts must be increased and replacement costs and depreciation increase
[351] proportionately. Compound walls are a similar expense. Zana mat (grass) walls must be replaced every two to three years while mud walls, only need repairs and maintenance after each rainy season, or perhaps after every two if they have been well constructed.

342 Building is handled in two ways. A common method among the
476 lower strata is for the household head aided by neighbours, friends and
565 relatives to organize a serwa (co-operative work group). The women of

[text continues on p.300]

342 the house often aided by the wives of the serwa participants cook a large
476 meal for the men who build the house. Materials are bought by the own-
565 er. This method is only practised in the construction of house types
342 "A" and "B". Secondly, building with mud is carried out by specialists
331 and they must be employed and paid to build the house. However, this
565 requirement is not clearcut; specialists are also used to construct house types "A" and "B", especially "B" which is a larger and more complicated variety. The determining variable for the use of specialists is social status. The higher the status of a male householder, the less likely is he to use a serwa and the more likely is he to utilize specialist la-
[369] bour. Today in the cities, southern Nigerians, especially Ibo contract-
[563] ors, as well as a few Hausa and Kanuri, contract with both the government and private indivudals to build houses using combinations of both traditional and western building techniques and design.

423 Rent is paid in the cities where houses are regularly pur-
[427] chased and sold by private persons. In rural areas, in the villages
[369] and hamlets, there is no need for house rental, since new housing is cheap and land is not scarce in or near the settlement. Land rights in Bornu are not, however, so simple, for the Kanuri do not operate their system of land tenure under one definite set of rules. The primary criterion for land ownership is usufruct. The land is given to the pea-
[425] sant by the political leader of the community. The peasant and his de-
scendants hold this property for as long as they maintain its use, giving
423 the feudal leader a tithe every year on the produce. In Magumeri, the
632 Lawan (Village Head) has nominal control over all free land within a radius of about three-quarters of a mile from the town. Farms within this circle are called kulo fatobe (compound or "House" farms), while those beyond are called kulo karabe (bush farms). Permission should be sought

423 rural house sites; (3) resting land which is owned through usufruct right but whose soil is depleted; (4) virgin land between settlements, 425 which is open to ownership through the operation of usufruct rights. Finally, land may be transferred through inheritance, allocation by political leaders, clearing of bush and sale or gift.

Labour

464 874 Besides his own efforts, the Kanuri male householder can obtain help for his craft work from apprentices, who have entered his service. On his farm he may get extra labour from: (1) his wife or wives; 241 464 476 (2) other compound members, such as apprentices, wives' relatives, or his own kinsmen or children, if these latter are old enough to contribute; (3) hired labourers who may work either on a contract price for the entire job, or by the day; (4) the co-operative work group (serwa) mentioned above. These people are not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another at farming, building and fixing houses, compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. Serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or a short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source, as well as upon social and physical mobility of individual group members. The following table indicates the sources of labour utilized by the seventy-five farm owners in the survey.

TABLE XVIII

Table Showing Numbers and Percentages of Cultivators Utilizing the Four Kinds of Labour Sources, in the Farm Survey

| Occupation | N | Men using wives | | Men using others in compound | | Men using labourers | | Men using serwa | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| farmers | 25 | 25 | 100 | 13 | 52 | 8 | 32 | 15 | 60 |
| craftsmen | 16 | 16 | 100 | 12 | 75 | 7 | 44 | 9 | 56 |
| traders | 17 | 17 | 100 | 13 | 77 | 12 | 71 | 6 | 35 |
| political and religious spec. | 17 | 16 | 94 | 5 | 29 | 6 | 35 | 6 | 35 |
| Totals | 75 | 74 | 98 | 43 | 57 | 33 | 44 | 36 | 48 |

241 464 593 The most striking result here is the almost universal reliance upon wives as a source of labour. The only exception in the sample was an upper class person, the headmaster of the Maguneri Junior Primary School, whose wife was confined to the compound in a marriage of seclusion. Several other figures in the table are suggestive. The relatively low percentage of "others in the compound" used by political and religious specialists (1) provokes the comment that the political specialists and a few of the religious practitioners in this group were subordinates of local political leaders. They in their turn had very few dependants or subordinates in their own compounds. The relatively low percentage of co-operative work group labour utilized by both traders and the political and religious specialists compared with the other groups (2) reflects their higher mobility and looser social ties with settled rural community life. Finally, the disproportionately high use of labourers by the traders indicates their interest in farming, but their inability to utilize traditional social relationships of kinship and/or settlement patterns to obtain labour sources, and points again to their looser integration in the local social organization.

241 592 571 241 476 571 241 464 571

511 Leaving aside urban or upper class members, the cash expenditures for the remaining fifteen rural budgets ranged from one to twelve pounds per annum for 1955-56 with four separate budgets totalling twelve pounds each for operating expenses. Taking £7.0.0 as a rough median measure of central tendency, this brings the total calculated annual expenditures for rural households in Bornu to £65.0.0 in cash values.

(1) This group is significantly different from the next lowest category in the table (farmers) at nearly the .05 level (P = 2.14).

(2) This difference is significant at the .05 level (P = 4.05) when the two top rows of serwa use are lumped and compared with the two bottom ones.